"Jerusalem" Set to Music: A Selected Discography

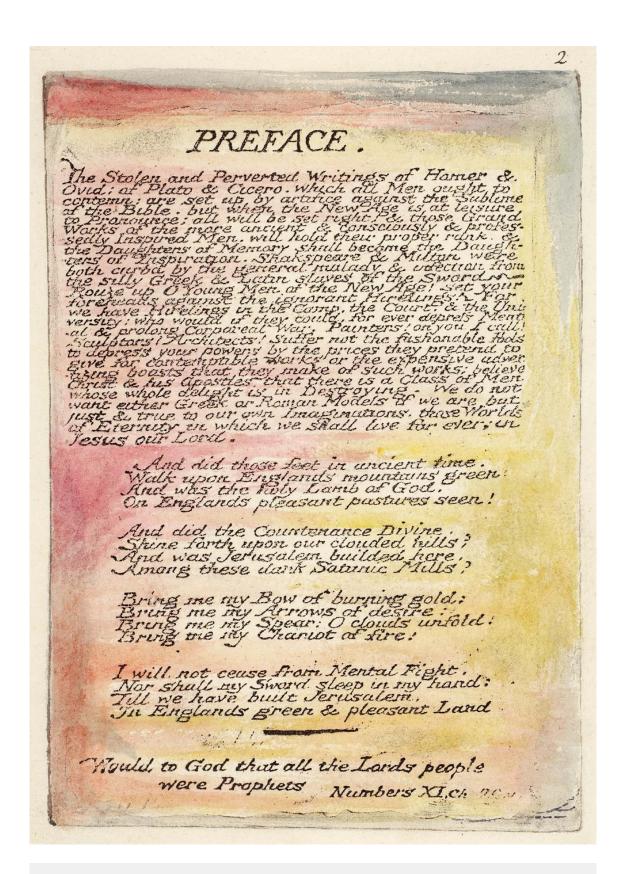
By Jason Whittaker

JASON WHITTAKER (jwhittaker@lincoln.ac.uk) is head of the School of English and Journalism at the University of Lincoln. He is the author of several works on William Blake, including William Blake and the Myths of Britain (Palgrave, 1999), Radical Blake: Influence and Afterlife from 1827 (with Shirley Dent, Palgrave, 2002), and Blake 2.0: William Blake in Twentieth-Century Art, Music and Culture (with Steve Clark and Tristanne Connolly, Palgrave, 2012). His main research interests in Blake deal with the reception of the poet and artist. He is currently completing a book on the first hundred years of the hymn "Jerusalem" and writing Divine Images: The Life and Works of William Blake (Reaktion Books).

- B LAKE'S stanzas from the preface to *Milton a Poem*, better known as the hymn "Jerusalem," are by far the most popular of his poems to have been set to music. While researching versions for a book on "Jerusalem," I discovered references to some 406 audio recordings and scores (a total that I suspect may still be expanded upon). These date from 1908—when Henry Walford Davies published the first in *England's Pleasant Land*, a set of three-part songs—to the reinterpretation of Hubert Parry's hymn by Tokio Myers and Jazmin Sawyers for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Donald Fitch's catalogue¹ was published in 1990 and thus misses the vast majority of recordings that appeared following the introduction of the CD in the late 1980s; he also omits more or less completely popular music versions, which had already begun to appear in the postwar period.
- 2 The fame of "Jerusalem" stems, of course, from Parry's composition in 1916, when he was persuaded by Davies and the poet laureate, Robert Bridges, to set Blake's words to music in the service of Fight for Right, a group that
 - 1. Donald Fitch, Blake Set to Music: A Bibliography of Musical Settings of the Poems and Prose of William Blake (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

- sought to rouse the morale of the nation in the depths of the First World War.² Over the ensuing century, Parry's hymn would be sung and heard again and again, whether performed by church choirs or in Women's Institutes, or listened to on shellac 78s, vinyl albums and singles, CDs, or, in more recent times, via audio streaming.
- 3 Of the many hundreds of releases, this list has been deliberately restricted to a selected discography of fifty recordings. While that Top 50 is necessarily somewhat arbitrary, it does prevent some of the monotony that comes from the succession of compilation discs in particular. Easily half of the versions I have discovered in recent years are repackaged earlier recordings, such as *The Great British Street Party 2012* ("120 Classic Songs and Anthems to Celebrate the Jubilee!") or the version by the Liverpool Cathedral Choir on the 2004 compilation *Perfect Wedding Classics*.
- The list therefore tends to focus on versions of "Jerusalem" that are unusual in some way. A few cases (marked with an asterisk) are original settings that owe nothing to Parry's composition. Most are arrangements that differ from Parry's original unison choral setting or his and Edward Elgar's later orchestral arrangements. One consequence of this is that the list frequently privileges popular music versions, simply because a variant for guitars or synthesizers is immediately recognizable compared to classical recordings. This is by no means a comment on the quality of those recordings or my own preferences: some of the popular versions here are included because they offer a notably different version of a familiar song and, novelty aside, are otherwise better forgotten. Alongside popular releases, I have tended to include early records that are often significant as the first publicly available choral or orchestral recording.
- As it is a discography, this list deliberately omits scores—most notably Parry's own versions for unison choir and then for orchestra, as well as Davies's soprano, alto, tenor, and bass (SATB) setting from 1908 or later arrangements of Parry, such as G. T. Thalben-Ball or the popular military brass-band version by Charles Hoby. Also omitted are versions that only sample the hymn or use it as a starting point (such as Nobody's 2009 rap song "Jerusalem" and the Justified Ancients of Mu Mu's 1991 "It's Grim Up North"), as well as albums and songs that simply allude to parts of the poem or to its themes (including Tim Blake's 1978 Blake's New Jerusalem, the Verve's 2008 "Love Is Noise," and Marc Almond's 2014 The Tyburn Tree).

^{2.} See Keri Davies, "Blake Set to Music," Steve Clark, Tristanne Connolly, and Jason Whittaker, eds., *Blake 2.0: William Blake in Twentieth-Century Art, Music and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 189-208.



Milton a Poem copy B, plate 2. Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Rare Books, call number 54041. Image courtesy of the *William Blake Archive*.

1. Arte Atomica — Canada

From *Hymn* (*Ali3n Mix*); for synthesizers, drum machine. T2 Digital Releases, © 2015. Electronic/dance. Streaming. Contents: 1. Hymn (Ali3n Mix).

Notes: This is an extended, instrumental-only, electronic dance mix of Parry's hymn.

Links: Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

2. Baccini, Sophya — Italy

From *Big Red Dragon*; for voices, keyboard, strings. Black Widow Records, © 2013. Rock/pop. CD.

Contents: 13. Jerusalem.

Notes: This is a prog rock concept album with a series of original compositions by Baccini, all of them inspired by Blake's paintings and engravings other than the final track, a variation on Parry's "Jerusalem."

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify, YouTube.

3. Barthel, Dennis — UK

From O Little Town of Bethlehem/Jerusalem; for voice, organ.

His Master's Voice, © 1932. Choral. Shellac (78).

Contents: B. Jerusalem.

Notes: Barthel was a boy soprano who performed this version of "Jerusalem" alongside Davies's "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

Link: YouTube.

4. Blake — UK

From *Blake*; for voices with orchestral accompaniment. Universal, © 2007. Classical, CD.

Contents: 13. Jerusalem.

Notes: Debut album by four school friends in the style of mid-twentieth-century popular arrangements.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

5. Bragg, Billy — UK

From The Internationale; for voice, piano.

Utility, © 1990. Folk. Vinyl.

Contents: 4. Blake's Jerusalem.

Notes: Comprising mainly cover versions of political songs, including "Jerusalem," it was released at the time of protests against the poll tax in the UK.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

6. Burnett, Matt — USA

From *Wildflower*; for piano. Walnut Tree Music, © 2005. New age. CD. Contents: 3. Jerusalem (William Blake and H. H. Parry). Notes: An instrumental-only version of the hymn.

Links: Amazon, Spotify.

7. The Castells — UK

From *Two Lovers/Jerusalem*; for voices, organ. United Artists Records, © 1967. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: A2. Jerusalem.

Notes: A psychedelic double A-side from this female duo, which appears not to have released any further records (not to be confused with the male doo-wop quartet of the same name).

8. Choir of the City Temple — UK

From *Jerusalem/Land of Hope and Glory*; for voices, organ. Broadcast Twelve Records, © 1930. Choral. Shellac (78). Contents: A. Jerusalem.

Notes: A-side of disc with Elgar's "Land of Hope and Glory" on the B-side.

9. Classical Renaissance — UK

From Jerusalem; for synthesizers.

Classical Renaissance Limited, © 2000. Electronic/dance. Vinyl.

Contents: A1. Jerusalem (Original Extended); A2. Jerusalem (Ubiq); B. Jerusalem (Gat Decor).

Notes: Electronic remixes of the Parry hymn.

Link: YouTube.

10. Collier, Jacob — UK

From *Ierusalem*; for voices.

Qwest Records, © 2015. Rock/pop. Streaming.

Contents: 1. Jerusalem.

Notes: An a cappella version sung by Collier with backing quartet and released as a standalone single.

Links: Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

11. Coren, Finn — Norway*

From *The Blake Project: Spring*; for voice, guitars, keyboard, drums.

Bard Records, © 1997. Rock/pop. CD.

Contents: 19. Jerusalem.

Notes: All tracks on this album are original compositions by Coren, including one of the few versions of "Jerusalem" not to be based on Parry's setting.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

12. Davenport, Bob, and Chumbawamba — UK*

From *The Common Stone*; for voices.

Topic Records, © 2004. Folk. CD.

Contents: 4. Jerusalem.

Notes: An original setting of Blake's words by Davenport, a leading voice in the English folk music revival, accompanied by the post-punk group Chumbawamba.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

13. Davis, Colin, and BBC Symphony Orchestra — UK

From *The Last Night of the Proms*; for voices with orchestral accompaniment.

BBC Enterprises, © 1969. Classical. Vinyl.

Contents: B2. Jerusalem.

Notes: The first release of recordings from the Last Night of the Proms by BBC Enterprises, which began to release music and spoken-word recordings in 1969.

14. Dickinson, Bruce — UK

From *The Chemical Wedding*; for voice, guitars, keyboard, drums.

Sanctuary Records, © 1998. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: 7. Jerusalem.

Notes: The fifth solo album by Dickinson includes three tracks inspired by Blake, one of which is a rock arrangement of "Jerusalem" loosely based on Parry's hymn.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

15. Emerson, Lake, and Palmer — UK

From Brain Salad Surgery; for voice, keyboard, guitars, drums.

Manticore Records, © 1973. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: 1. Jerusalem.

Notes: The opening track, "Jerusalem," was also released as a 7" single in the same year but was banned from airplay in the UK because of concerns around potential blasphemy.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

16. Faces — UK

From Long Player; for solo guitar.

Warner Bros., © 1971. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: B4. Jerusalem.

Notes: "Jerusalem" is erroneously credited on the albumsleeve notes as "traditional," with no mention of Parry. This is an innovative instrumental arrangement by Ronnie Wood for slide guitar.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

17. The Fall — UK

From I Am Kurious Oranj; for voice, guitars, drums, keyboard.

Beggars Banquet Records, © 1988. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: A3. Dog Is Life/Jerusalem.

Notes: Intended as a soundtrack for the ballet *I Am Curious*, *Orange*, by Michael Clark, the title ostensibly takes its inspiration from the 300th anniversary of William of Orange's ascension to the English throne. "Dog Is Life/ Jerusalem" was also released as a double A-side single with "New Big Prinz."

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

18. Fat Les 2000, London Community Gospel Choir, London Gay Male Chorus, and New London Children's Choir — UK

From Jerusalem; for voices, variously accompanied.

Parlophone, © 2000. Rock/pop. CD.

Contents: 1. Jerusalem (Master); 2. Jerusalem (Pet Shop Boys Mix); 3. Jerusalem (Two Bobs Mix); 4. Jerusalem (Instrumental); 5. Jerusalem (Posh Mix).

Notes: An EP of various remixes of the Blake-Parry hymn released by Alex James, Keith Allen, and Damien Hirst as the official song for Euro 2000.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify, YouTube.

19. Flagstad, Kirsten, Adrian Boult, and London Philharmonic Orchestra — Norway, UK

From *Great Sacred Songs*; for voice with orchestral accompaniment

Decca, © 1957. Classical. Vinyl.

Contents: 5. Jerusalem, op. 208.

Link: YouTube.

20. Giltrap, Gordon — UK

From O Jerusalem; for pan pipes, guitar, keyboards.

Electric Record Company, © 1979. New age. Vinyl.

Contents: 1. O Jerusalem.

Notes: An instrumental version arranged by Giltrap and released as the A-side of a 7" single.

Link: YouTube.

21. Hamill, Claire — UK

From *Domesday*; for voice, keyboards, drum machine.

Coda Records, © 1986. New age. Vinyl.

Contents: A1. Glastonbury (Jerusalem).

Notes: A four-track EP by singer-songwriter Claire Hamill; the label, Coda Records, was a subsidiary of Beggars Banquet, which attempted to capitalize on new-age music

(hence the addition of "Glastonbury" to the title). Links: *Spotify*, *YouTube*.

22. The Harmonies — UK

From *Voices of the WI*; for voice, guitars, percussion. Bright & Loud Records, © 2010. Country and western. CD. Contents: 1. Jerusalem.

Notes: This one-off album by five-piece girlband the Harmonies, formed out of a competition run by the Women's Institute, includes a country version of Parry's hymn.

Links: AllMusic, Spotify.

23. Järvi, Neeme, Amanda Roocroft, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and BBC National Chorus of Wales — Estonia/USA, UK

From *Hubert Parry: Orchestral and Choral Works*; for voice with orchestral accompaniment.

Chandos, © 2012. Classical. CD.

Contents: 13. Jerusalem.

Notes: This constitutes one of the most important recordings of a collection of Parry's works, almost a century after his death, including his original orchestration of "Jerusalem."

Links: AllMusic, Apple, Spotify.

24. Jones, Paul — UK

From *Privilege*; for voice, guitar, bass, drums. His Master's Voice, © 1967. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: B5. Jerusalem.

Notes: One of the tracks from the soundtrack to Peter Watkins's film *Privilege*, performed by Paul Jones (formerly of Manfred Mann) as the George Bean Group.

25. Kielland, Marianne Beate, and Jan Gunnar Hoff — Norway

From *Terra Nova*; for voice, piano. Lawo Classics, © 2017. Classical. CD.

Contents: 11. Jerusalem.

Notes: Arrangement for piano and mezzo-soprano.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

26. Komuro, Tetsuya — Japan

From *EDM Tokyo*; for voice, guitars, keyboards, percussion.

Avex Trax, © 2014. Electronic/dance. CD.

Contents: 10. Jerusalem.

Notes: A rather strange electronica version by one of the most successful producers in Japanese music, with vocals by Ashton Moore.

Links: Apple, Spotify.

27. Kopasz, Paul (Paul K.) — USA

From Blues for Charlie Lucky; for voice, guitar.

SilenZ Records, © 1993. Jazz/blues. CD.

Contents: 8. Jerusalem.

Notes: A distinctive acoustic folk/blues version of the

hymn.

Links: AllMusic, Spotify.

28. Lloyd, David, and HM Welsh Guards — UK

From *England/Jerusalem*; for voice with orchestral accompaniment.

Columbia, © 1940. Classical. Shellac (78).

Contents: B1. Jerusalem.

Notes: An early recording by the Welsh tenor David George

Lloyd.

Link: YouTube.

29. Lucas, Gary, and Dean Bowman — USA

From Chase the Devil; for voice, guitar.

Knitting Factory Records, © 2009. Jazz/blues. CD.

Contents: 10. Jerusalem.

Notes: A jazz version of Parry's hymn.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

30. Mark Stewart and the Mafia — UK

From *Jerusalem*; for voice with samples.

On-U Sound, © 1982. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: A1. Jerusalem.

Notes: The first release by Mark Stewart after leaving the Pop Group, this highly experimental version of the Parry hymn makes heavy use of sampling as an early example of dub music.

Link: YouTube.

31. McCormack, John — Ireland

From John McCormack; for voice, piano.

World Records, © 1980. Classical. Vinyl.

Contents: E10. Jerusalem.

Notes: Released as part of a four-disc compilation of recordings by the operatic tenor John McCormack, the original (unreleased) recording of the Blake-Parry hymn is 1941.

Link: YouTube.

32. Mike Westbrook Orchestra — UK

From The Cortège; for voice, tuba.

Original Records, © 1982. Jazz/blues. Vinyl.

Contents: B3. Santarcangelo: Free as a Bird/Evening/ Jerusalem/Dawn/Piped Music/Dirge/Didn't He Ramble/ Cadenza.

Notes: A jazz arrangement by Mike Westbrook based on Parry's composition as part of a medley of various settings of poems to music.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

33. Monstergod — Poland*

From Resurrected; for voices, synthesizers.

EK Product, © 2012. Electronic/dance. CD.

Contents: 6. Jerusalem; 13. Jerusalem (Single Edit); 15. Jerusalem (Controlled Collapse Remix); 16. Jerusalem (Egoist Remix).

Notes: An electro-industrial version of Blake's poem that begins with a sample of Parry's hymn before segueing into an original composition.

Links: Amazon, Apple, Spotify, YouTube.

34. Myers, Tokio, and Jazmin Sawyers — UK

From Jerusalem (The Official Anthem of Commonwealth Games, Team England, 2018); for voices with orchestral accompaniment.

Simco Limited, © 2018. Rock/pop. Streaming.

Contents: 1. Jerusalem.

Notes: A new arrangement of Parry's hymn for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Links: Amazon, Apple, Spotify, YouTube.

35. Otway, John — UK

From The New Jerusalem; for voices, guitar, percussion.

WEA, © 1986. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: A. The New Jerusalem.

Notes: 7" single of Parry's setting with an original compo-

sition of "The Tyger" on the B-side.

Link: YouTube.

36. Papadatos, Dimitris (Ku) — Greece*

From Feathers; for voice, synthesizers.

Inner Ear Records, © 2013. Electronic/dance. Vinyl.

Contents: 2. Jerusalem.

Notes: An original setting of Blake's text to music.

Links: Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

37. Partridge, Don — UK

From The Kerbside Entertainers; for voice, guitar.

Jay Boy, © 1971. Folk. Vinyl.

Contents: B6. Jerusalem.

Notes: Originally made in 1965 on a hard-to-find, self-published EP, it is the first folk version of "Jerusalem" to be recorded.

38. Pinns, Suzi — UK

From *Rule Britannia/Jerusalem*; for voice, guitars, drums. Polydor, © 1978. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: B. Jerusalem.

Notes: A punk version of the hymn, originally sung in Derek Jarman's film *Jubilee* and later released as a single.

Link: YouTube.

39. Pryce-Jones, Colin — UK

From Guitar Heaven; for guitars, drums.

Fury Records, © 1999. Rock/pop. CD.

Contents: 1. Jerusalem.

Notes: A compilation of rockabilly tracks by Pryce-Jones, including an instrumental version of "Jerusalem."

Link: YouTube.

40. Robeson, Paul — USA

From Jerusalem/The Blind Ploughman; for voice with orchestral accompaniment.

Victor Records, © 1939. Classical. Shellac (78).

Contents: A. Jerusalem.

Notes: Originally included with a B-side, "The Blind Ploughman" (lyrics by Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall, set to music by Robert Coningsby Clarke), this has been reissued several times, including the following year with an alternative B-side, "She Is Far from the Land," and on subsequent compilations of Robeson's music.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify, YouTube.

41. Robinson, Stanford, W. G. Webber, and BBC Choir — UK

From Jerusalem/Jesus Shall Reign; for voices, organ.

Columbia, © 1927. Choral. Shellac (78).

Contents: A. Jerusalem.

Notes: A-side with Isaac Watts's "Jesus Shall Reign" on the B-side.

42. Roper, Stanley, and Choir of HM Chapels Royal — UK

From *Jerusalem/There Shall a Star*; for voices, organ. His Master's Voice, © 1926. Choral. Shellac (78).

Contents: Ierusalem.

Notes: Double A-side with Mendelssohn.

43. Sargent, Malcolm, Philharmonia Orchestra, and Royal Choral Society — UK

From *Jerusalem/Rule Britannia*; for voices with orchestral accompaniment.

His Master's Voice, © 1953. Choral. Shellac (78).

Contents: A. Jerusalem.

Notes: Recorded in 1952 at Abbey Road Studios, this was the first of several recordings by Sargent.

44. Sidwell, Martindale, and St. Clement Danes Choir — UK

From Hymn Singing in St. Clement Danes Royal Air Force Church; for voices, organ.

Decca, © 1959. Choral. Vinyl.

Contents: B2. Jerusalem.

Notes: Four-track EP including "Praise My Soul the King of Heaven," "The God of Love My Shepherd Is," and "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." All profits went to the St. Clement Danes Church Fund.

45. Silver Servants — UK

From *Silver Servants*; for voice, keyboards, guitar, bass guitar, trumpet, drum machine.

Second Language, © 2014. Rock/pop. CD.

Contents: 4. Jerusalem.

Notes: An arrangement of the Parry hymn from the eponymous debut experimental/folk-rock album.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify, YouTube.

46. Simple Minds — UK

From *The Amsterdam EP*; for guitars, drums, keyboard.

Virgin Records, © 1989. Rock/pop. Vinyl.

Contents: 4. Jerusalem.

Notes: An instrumental-only version from the Glaswegian rock group that was immensely successful during the 1980s.

Links: Amazon, Apple, Spotify.

47. Stahlwerk 9 — Germany*

From RetroMekanik; for voice, synthesizers.

Steinklang Industries, © 2009. Electronic/dance. Streaming.

Contents: 11. Jerusalem.

Notes: An industrial noise version of Blake's poem.

Link: Bandcamp.

48. Test Dept., Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and Schola Cantorum — UK

From *Pax Britannica*; for voices with orchestral accompaniment and percussion.

Ministry of Power, © 1991. Classical. Vinyl.

Contents: A2. Jerusalem.

Notes: Recorded during the poll-tax protests, this version of "Jerusalem" follows Elgar's arrangement until the midpoint, where it breaks into a speech by Margaret Thatcher.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Apple, Spotify, YouTube.

49. Wakeman, Rick — UK

From *Morning Has Broken*; for piano.

Kevin Mayhew, © 2000. Classical. CD.

Contents: 6. Jerusalem.

Notes: Instrumental version for piano with expansive vari-

ations by the former keyboardist with Yes.

Links: AllMusic, YouTube.

50. Wood, Chris — UK*

From *None the Wiser*; for voice, electric guitar, double bass, keyboard.

R.U.F. Records, © 2013. Folk. CD.

Contents: 2. Jerusalem.

Notes: An original folk setting of Blake's stanzas.

Links: AllMusic, Amazon, Spotify.